COMMANDERS DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE • WASHINGTON, D.C.

Vol. 4, No. 12 February 10, 1968

SEA DRAGON OBSERVERS—Adm. John J. Hyland (right), Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, watches the shelling of North Vietnamese military targets from the bridge of the heavy cruiser USS Newport News. With him are VAdm. William F. Bringle (left), Commander, Seventh Fleet, and RAdm. Sheldon H. Kinney, Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla Eleven and head of Sea Dragon operation.

LBJ Seeks Congressional Approval Of $7.3 Billion in Veterans Benefits

President Johnson has asked Congress to approve increased job opportunities and benefits for veterans, including the expansion of existing Department of Defense programs.

In a special message to Congress Jan. 30, the President urged that recommended programs under the $7.3 billion veterans section of the fiscal 1969 budget be aimed at assisting veterans to function as "free, upstanding and self-reliant citizens" upon their return to civilian life.

Among the President's recommendations were the expansion of two DOD programs, Project 100,000 and Project Transition. Also included was a new "Veterans in the Public Service Act" which would provide special financial benefits for veterans who agree to work as teachers in poverty areas, in police departments or in fire departments, and the expansion of a program for counseling servicemen before and immediately after discharge.

President Johnson praised the results of both Project 100,000 and Project Transition, stating it is necessary to assure job opportunities for "the veteran who has received few other advantages from life."

Pointing to Project 100,000, the President said that in its first year the program reached 50,000 "disadvantaged young Americans" who would have otherwise been rejected by the armed forces because of educational or physical limitations.

Of the 50,000 men under the program, Mr. Johnson said, 96 percent

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Sec. Brown Lauds Role of Airpower In Vietnam War

Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown has credited airpower with a large role in the continued defeat of aggression in South Vietnam.

Mr. Brown told a meeting of the Michigan Aeronautics and Space Association in Detroit, Feb. 2, that "largely as a result of the mobility and firepower of our aircraft, the enemy has never been able to claim a major victory" since U.S. troops were committed to Vietnam.

"We are defeating a guerrilla war aggression with a ratio of forces less than half that usually required," he added.

Dividing the air campaign into two areas, the air war against North Vietnam and the air war in the south, Mr. Brown said none of the Air Force's tactical capabilities is "more vital" than the close air support provided troops engaged in operations against enemy forces in South Vietnam.

"The ground rule in our Tactical Air Control System is that troops in contact with the enemy get first priority. Cooperation with our ground forces in Vietnam is our most critical job."

Mr. Brown said Air Force pilots flew 71,000 attack sorties in the south in 1966, largely in support of ground units, compared with a majority of the estimated 117,000 combat flights in 1967 which were designated close air support missions.

In addition to the Air Force effort, he said, nearly 53,000 attack sorties were flown by Marine pilots,

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Airpower in Vietnam

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450 by the Navy, and almost 30,000 by the Vietnamese Air Force during 1967.

Because close air support is often critical in ground combat, Mr. Brown added, "the Air Force is extremely interested in the speed with which it can respond to close air support requests." He said the Air Force often has fighter aircraft immediately available on airborne alert during scheduled ground operations, but that where troops cannot receive instant support "we are exerting every effort to insure that they get fast-reacting support—in a matter of minutes."

He said that by diverting airborne aircraft or using aircraft which are on constant ground alert, "we can usually be over the target within 15 minutes."

The importance of the Air Force role in close air support was highlighted by the list of new aircraft Mr. Brown said will "maintain the effectiveness of our close air support." Among the aircraft mentioned by Mr. Brown were the A-7D Corsair II, which can carry 15,000 pounds of ordnance with a range of 2,000 miles that can be converted into loiter time; the A-37, a twin-jet that is slower and more maneuverable than high-performance jet fighters and has some loiter capability, and the experimental A-X which would replace the A-1E propeller-driven Skyraider.

The A-X, Mr. Brown said, would be comparable with the A-1's loiter capability, but would carry twice the ordnance at twice the A-1's speed.

Touching briefly on the bombing operations over North Vietnam, Mr. Brown said "we have tried to keep this conflict as limited as possible—consistent with our objectives. By bombing operations we (have) sought to limit the very great potential for infiltration, to show Hanoi that it would have to pay a high price for aggression, and to improve the hope and determination of the long suffering people in the South."

Veterans Benefits Proposals

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graduated from basic training and that some have gone on to Non-Commissioned Officer schools. Because of the success of Project 100,000, the President said, he is directing the Secretary of Defense to enroll 100,000 men "in this vital program" during its second year.

The President said he has also asked the Defense Secretary to extend Project Transition to all principal troop installations in the United States with hopes of reaching 500,000 servicemen in the coming year.

"Project Transition gives a boost to disadvantaged men in the six months before they return to civilian life. Men without civilian skills and without education receive a concentrated program of preparation," the President said. "In classrooms and at work benches, through counseling and job placement services, they are prepared for the road home."

Under the President's proposed "Veterans in the Public Service Act," a veteran would receive federal financial assistance should he decide to:

- Teach in poverty areas;
- Work in local hospitals where skills are short;
- Man understrength police forces and fire departments;
- Join VISTA, work in Youth Opportunity Centers and in the Concentrated Employment Program.

The President proposed that Veterans Administration counseling service not only be expanded but extended into the entire system of military hospitals and all of the nation's 257 military separation points in order to be certain that the estimated 850,000 servicemen leaving the armed forces in the coming year are "familiar with the benefits that await them as veterans."

Other recommendations by the President were:

- Increase Servicemen's Group Life Insurance from a maximum of $10,000 to a minimum of $12,000—with higher amounts scaled to the serviceman's pay with a maximum of $30,000.
- Increase the maximum guarantee on GI home loans from $7,500 to $10,000, a figure the President said is more realistic in today's housing market.
- Expansion of vocational rehabilitation for veterans disabled while in uniform which would allow them to receive federal training allowances for part-time training while still holding a job.
- Increased veteran's preference in Civil Service employment to provide the veteran who needs experience, skill and education with priority employment in the first five Civil Service levels, without having to compete in the regular examination, provided he agrees to pursue a part-time educational program under the GI bill.
- Enactment of a joint Congressional resolution urging private industry to provide job priority to returning servicemen.
- Stepped-up training of medical specialists in the hope of training as many as 80,000 this year under the auspices of the Veterans Administration.

In a companion move to the veterans counseling plan, the President ordered the opening of Veterans Assistance Centers in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, Washington, San Francisco, Boston and Atlanta, with plans for similar centers in other larger cities as soon as possible.

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Published semi-weekly by Armed Forces Press Service, 1117 N. 19th St., Arlington, Va. 22209, a unified activity of the Office of Information for the Armed Forces, OASD(M&RA). Reproduction of content is authorized. Suggested dateline for materials used is WASHINGTON (AFPS).

Statements on FY69 DOD Manpower Programs By Sec. McNamara in 'Posture' Report to Senate

In presenting the Fiscal Year 1969 Defense Budget before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara outlined DOD policy, recommendations and statistics in the area of manpower. Selected portions of his statements are presented here.

Personnel Strengths

Both military and civilian personnel strengths will be somewhat higher at the end of FY68 than projected a year ago. In FY69, civilian strength levels are expected to rise slightly, while military strengths decline slightly.

The second phase (of the civilian/military substitution program) is more than 40 percent completed. We expect to complete most of the second phase by the end of the current fiscal year and fully complete it early in FY69.

In the first substitution phase, which was completed June 1967, 74,300 military positions were substituted by 60,500 civilian positions.

Because of the substitution program, total military personnel strength will drop about 12,400 in FY69.

Vietnam Personnel

The normal tour of duty in South Vietnam has been and will continue to be 12 months, the shortest possible tour consistent with the military requirement.

Since November 1966, under the provisions of PL 89-735, the Department has been granting a special 30-day leave for service members who voluntarily extend their tours of duty in Vietnam and by December 31, 1967, over 1,300 officers and 48,000 enlisted men had done so. This authority, which has been of significant help in meeting our Vietnam-related manpower requirements, expires on June 30, 1968. We now recommend indefinite extension of the authority to grant special leaves to those who voluntarily extend their tours for at least six months.

Project 100,000

Between October 1967 and September 1968 we will be taking into military service about 100,000 men who in the past would have been disqualified because of educational deficiencies or correctable physical defects. The results obtained from the 49,000 accepted during the first year of the program (October 1966-September 1967) have been most encouraging—96 percent completed basic training compared with 98 percent of all other men. Only about 10 percent of this group required extra help in basic training, compared with four percent of all other trainees. About one-third of the first year group have been trained in combat specialties, with the remainder receiving training in a variety of specialties. We plan to continue this program in FY69.

Project Transition

Project Transition consists of five basic elements: A comprehensive counseling program, a skill training program for civilian related jobs, a program aimed at the completion of the equivalency of high school education, a placement program to relate the training received to actual job opportunities and an evaluation program to follow-up on individuals after they leave the service to determine the effectiveness of the program. The program uses civilian-related military training courses and facilities, courses provided by other Federal Agencies or sponsored by the Manpower Development and Training Act, and instructions provided by private industry in areas where companies have specific job requirements. Training will take place at all major installations during the last one to six months of a man's term of service. We estimate that of the 750,000 men who leave active duty each year, as many as 20 percent may participate in Project Transition training.

Equal Opportunity

Overall, our progress during the past half year has been encouraging. In our housing census last May, June and July, we identified 1.1 million rental units (in facilities with five or more units) near military bases which could be utilized by service personnel seeking off-base housing. Of these, only 59 percent were open to all military families. By year's end the proportion increased to 75 percent. "Open" units listed with base housing officers rose during the period from 241,700 to 585,800, or more than double.

I am convinced that the time has come when we must insist on this simple measure of equity for our Negro servicemen and that once having made a sincere attempt to obtain voluntary compliance, the Department should delay no further in taking appropriate action to remedy an unsatisfactory situation. The Negro serviceman and his family deserve the opportunity, on-base and off-base, to live with pride and dignity.

Military Compensation

The President's FY69 Budget, under Government-wide contingencies, includes the funds required to support the automatic July 1, 1968 pay increase, enacted as part of last year's pay bill.

Manpower Procurement

In FY67 a total of 590,000 officers and enlisted personnel volunteered for active duty, about 60,000 less than in FY66, but considerably more than in any other year since 1952. We expect recruitment levels in FY68 and FY69 to equal or exceed those of FY67.

Because of the high enlistment levels, only the Army has had to resort to induction during the past year and a half. The Army has now entered a replacement cycle

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WEAPON DEMONSTRATION—Maj. William P. Rovan, USA, displays a 40 mm. grenade launcher, part of a manufacturer's demonstration staged by the U.S. Army Infantry Board at Ft. Benning, Ga. Inspecting the launcher are (left to right) Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr., Ft. Benning commander, Col. Alvin C. Isaacs, project manager, rifles, Army Materiel Command, and Maj. William R. Lee, small arms test officer, USAIB. Maj. Rovan is an instructor on the company tactics committee, company operations department.

DOD Testimony Supports Bill On Harassing Phone Calls

The Department of Defense is continuing its support of legislation to protect servicemen and their families from obscene and harassing telephone calls.

The bill (S.375) would make such calls "in interstate or foreign commerce" a federal offense. Its provisions would also apply to the District of Columbia.

"The impact of these acts on the morale and well-being of each service member and his family directly affected is obvious," a DOD witness told a House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Subcommittee conducting hearings Jan. 30.

The DOD witness gave these facts:

- From about May 1965 to date, DOD has identified 205 known incidents of harassment.
- Not all the incidents were by telephone (the bill is limited to this form of public communications) and came through a variety of means such as letters, post cards, telegrams, and even face-to-face visits.
- Incidents were generally related to military operations in Vietnam and elsewhere.
- Their nature "has included everything from false reports of death or injury to threats, demands for money for the Viet Cong, and gloating comment on the actual death of servicemen."

Noting the volume of such incidents is not large and has tended to drop, the witness said one factor in the decline is "the publicity given to the nation's outrage at these acts by Congressional consideration of remedial legislation during the 89th and 90th Congresses." A second factor is "the excellent cooperation we have received from the commercial telephone companies," the witness testified.

DOD recognizes the overall problem of obscene and harassing communications goes beyond service families, the witness said, and therefore "defers to the wisdom of the Congress on the content of the specific legislation and to the views of the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission on the technical merits of particular proposals."

DOD Announces Increase In Progress Payment Rate

The Department of Defense ha changed procurement regulations t increase normal progress payme rates from 70 to 80 percent of tot incurred costs under fixed price, lon lead time contracts.

Effective March 1, the change wa made to align financial assistan policies with the greatly increased us of fixed price type contracts by th Defense Department over the pa several years.

According to DOD officials "th increase of progress payment pe centage does not apply to contrac existing before March 1, 1968, or orders under or modifications of suc contracts, whether or not involvi additional work or quantities."

Manpower Statements

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for the relatively large number draftees who were called up in FY6 and as a result we now estimate th draft calls will average 28,000 p month in FY68. Our projections i dicate a somewhat lower Army r quirement for FY69, averaging a proximately 20,000 per month.

In recent years, it has been nec sary to procure physicians, denti and other medical specialists via t Selective Service System. It will b necessary to do so again in the ca of physicians in FY69. However, w estimate that only 1,226 of these sp cialists will have to be called in FY6 compared with 2,229 in FY68.

Active duty officer candidate trai ing programs will continue to pr vide a significant portion of the ne officers required in FY68 and FY6 We expect to obtain a total of 34,0 new officers from these programs FY68. In FY69 we expect to recei a total of 23,500 officers from th source—10,000 Army, 7,000 Nav 3,500 Marine Corps and 3,000 A Force.

In FY69, we estimate that approx mately 263,000 students will be e rolled in ROTC courses, 59,000 in th advancement program, and we expe to commission a total of 23,000.

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Price 5 cents (single copy). Subscription Price: $2.50 per year; $3.25 additional for foreign mailing.